

REMARKS

In view of the above amendments and following remarks, reconsideration of the rejections contained in the Office Action of January 14, 2004 is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-6 and 9 as being clearly anticipated by Sommer et al., U.S. 6,447,347 (Sommer). Claims 7 and 8, further, were rejected as being unpatentable over Sommer in view of Elder, U.S. 6,428,407. Claim 10 was rejected as being unpatentable over Sommer in view of Skrovan, U.S. 6,361,413. Lastly, claims 11 and 13 were rejected as being anticipated by Skrovan or, alternatively, obvious from Skrovan in view of Noto et al., U.S. 4,268,999. However, it is respectfully submitted that the present invention, particularly as reflected by amended and new claims 1-15 above, clearly patentably distinguishes over each of the references cited by the Examiner.

Each of independent claims 1 and 11 has been amended to recite that dressers are disposed on both sides of the top ring along the first direction for dressing the polishing surface. The first direction is the direction in which at least one of the top ring and the polishing table reciprocates linearly.

As can for example be seen from Fig. 2, dressers 21a and 21b are provided on both sides of the top ring 17 with respect to the direction of reciprocation of the polishing table 12 along guide rail 11. Also note new claims 14 and 15 depending from claims 1 and 11, respectively. Further note that the original specification supports the amendments and new claims at least on page 12, lines 13-17, and Figs. 1A and 1B.

The initially cited patent to Sommer does not disclose or suggest dressers disposed on both sides of the top ring along the first direction. Sommer does disclose a conditioning module 108 for conditioning the web 114. However, it does not disclose or suggest dressers that are disposed on both sides of the top ring along the first direction in which at least one of the top ring and the polishing table reciprocates. Thus claim 1 as now amended clearly patentably distinguishes over Sommer.

Skrovan discloses a conditioning element 160, for example, for conditioning a polishing pad 40. However, it does not disclose or suggest dressers disposed on both sides of the top ring

along the first direction in which at least one of the top ring and the polishing table reciprocates. Thus claim 11 as now amended also clearly distinguishes over Skrovan.

The additionally cited references to Elder and Noto do not cure the above deficiencies of Sommer and Skrovan. Accordingly, no further discussion of these references appears necessary at this time.

Nonetheless, Applicants reserve all rights to further argue against the combinations of references made by the Examiner, and no acquiescence to the positions taken by the Examiner with respect to the combinations should be taken by this response.

In view of the above it is respectfully submitted that all claims now pending in the present application are in condition for allowance. Indication of such is respectfully requested.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and the Examiner is requested to pass the case to issue. If the Examiner should have any comments or suggestions to help speed the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned representative.

Respectfully submitted,

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